

Since it is money taken from those States, it would seem we would want to give the States the option to make the best priority choice for those dollars for their individual citizens.

I am very appreciative of Senator MURRAY's agreement to take two of our amendments that are based on transparency to the American public. One requires HUD to report to Congress on homes that are owned and the cost to taxpayers so the American people see what the Department of Housing and Urban Development is doing. The other is an amendment to make available to the public all the reports—and there are numerous reports required in this bill of the Transportation Department—to make those available to the public as well so it is in the light of transparency. I am very thankful for Senator MURRAY's agreement on those two amendments.

I have two other amendments I will talk about when Senator MURRAY gets to the floor. Otherwise, Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3288, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3288) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Coburn/McCain amendment No. 2371, to remove an unnecessary and burdensome mandate on the States, by allowing them to opt out of a provision that requires States to spend 10 percent of their surface transportation funds on enhancement projects such as roadkill reduction and highway beautification.

Coburn/McCain amendment No. 2370, to fully provide for the critical surface transportation needs of the United States by prohibiting funds from being used on lower-priority projects, such as roadkill reduction programs, transportation museums, scenic beautification projects, or bicycle paths, if the Highway Trust Fund does not contain amounts sufficient to cover unfunded highway authorizations.

Coburn/McCain amendment No. 2372, to fully provide for the critical surface transportation needs of the United States by pro-

hibiting funds from being used on lower-priority projects, such as transportation museums.

Coburn amendment No. 2374, to determine the total cost to taxpayers of Government ownership of residential homes.

Coburn Amendment No. 2377, to require public disclosure of certain reports.

Wicker modified amendment No. 2366, to permit Amtrak passengers to safely transport firearms and ammunition in their checked baggage.

Vitter amendment No. 2376, to affirm the continuing existence of the community service requirements under section 12(c) of the United States Housing Act of 1937.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, we are now here on our fifth day of considering the transportation and housing appropriations bill. We do have a number of amendments that have been offered. The Senator from Oklahoma is here. He has the first 30 minutes under the previous order. I have the following 10 minutes. I would like all Senators to know that if all time is not used, we intend to yield back and we expect that these votes may occur as early as 11:30.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I join with my colleague, the Senator from Washington, in saying please let's get on with it. This will fill out a full week now. This will be Thursday through Wednesday we have been on the floor. We want to bring these amendments forward. I understand we may not need 40 minutes, and we certainly would like to get these votes started so we can wrap them up before we break for the scheduled lunches.

Again, if the Senators could be ready for a vote, we hope as early as 11:30, no later than 11:40, and we will have a series of votes. We look forward to dealing with these amendments and moving on to others.

I thank our colleagues for their attention and let's get on with it. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

AMENDMENT NO. 2370, AS MODIFIED

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I believe the desk has a modification to amendment No. 2370, and I ask unanimous consent for that modification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to modifying the amendment?

Without objection, the amendment is so modified.

The amendment (No. 2370), as modified, is as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. (a) None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for any purpose described in subsection (b) until the date on which the Secretary of Transportation certifies, based on the estimates made under section 9503(d)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 of unfunded highway authorizations in relation to net highway receipts (as those terms are defined in that section) for the period of fiscal years 2010 through 2013,

that the Highway Trust Fund contains or will contain amounts sufficient to cover all such unfunded highway authorizations for those fiscal years.

(b) The purposes referred to in subsection (a) are—

- (1) transportation museums;
- (2) scenic beautification projects; and
- (3) pedestrian or bicycle facility projects.

AMENDMENT NO. 2371

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I wish to talk about all three of the amendments I plan on getting votes on. I will give a little summary on amendment No. 2371.

The way the highway trust fund spending is set up now is that if we send your State \$100 million, \$10 million of that \$100 million has to be spent on enhancement projects, regardless of the condition of your roads, regardless of the condition of your highways, regardless of the condition of the bridges in your State. All this does is allow States to not have to follow that in this, No. 1, tough economic time; No. 2, when we know highway deaths related to roads and bridges alone account for 13,000 deaths a year. So we will intend to ask for a vote on that. It does not prohibit the States from doing these enhancements, much as was claimed in debate yesterday but, rather, gives an opportunity for the States to make good value judgments about what is in the best interests of their State in terms of highways, roads, and bridges.

AMENDMENT NO. 2372

Amendment No. 2372 is an amendment which requires us to prioritize. Unbeknownst to most Americans, money that is collected from the purchase of your gasoline has been used—\$28 million of it, as a matter of fact—to fund transportation museums. That may be a great use in a time when we are not in the economic situation and circumstances we find ourselves in today. What this amendment does is say, until we get out of the trouble we are in and until the trust fund gets back to where it needs to be, we shouldn't be prioritizing and we shouldn't be earmarking money for transportation museums. It goes back to common sense. The money we are collecting in gas taxes ought to be used to repair and build highways and bridges and roads, not fund museums.

As a matter of fact, several of the museums that have been funded in the last 5 years are already closed. They came through earmarks. We spent millions of dollars. Nobody had any interest in them; consequently, they were closed. In this one bill we have one that has been earmarked. It may be the right thing to do, but now is not the right time to do it.

So what this amendment simply does is say that for this year—this year only—we are not going to allow lower priority items such as a transportation museum to displace money that could be used to enhance somebody's safety or protect their life. I don't know what the outcome on this will be, but I think it will be a telling statement for the Congress that if we decide museums